

COMMENTS OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
ON S. 1589, 87TH CONGRESS, 1ST SESSION, A BILL TO
AMEND THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE
ISSUANCE OF RADIO OPERATOR LICENSES TO NATIONALS
OF THE UNITED STATES

S. 1589 would amend Section 303(1) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, by inserting the words "or nationals" immediately following the words "citizens" so that Section 303(1) would read in part:

"Have authority to prescribe the qualifications of station operators, to classify them according to the duties to be performed, to fix the forms of such licenses, and to issue them to such citizens or nationals of the United States as the Commission finds qualified..."

This bill was introduced at the request of the Department of the Interior for the main purpose of enhancing safe and efficient navigation by the use of radio in the American Samoa area. The inability of nationals of the United States to obtain operator licenses imposes a serious handicap upon shipping in and from the waters of American Samoa since numerous privately-owned ^{craft} are manned by Samoans who are United States nationals but not citizens.

If this bill is enacted, the Federal Communications Commission, which now has statutory authority to issue radio operator licenses only to citizens of the United States and in certain cases to foreign nationals in the field of aviation, will be empowered to issue them to nationals of the United States as well.

The Commission, mindful of its statutory duty to promote safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communications, favors legislation such as this which would make for safer and more efficient navigation in the Samoa area.

Upon amendment of the Act as proposed, the Commission probably would be called upon to conduct examinations for operator licenses in Samoa. Doing so would involve some additional expense to the Commission since the nearest place at which the Commission maintains a field office is Honolulu. In other such remote places we have had the

assistance of other Federal Government agencies, such as the Navy and the Signal Corps, in conducting examinations. When these agencies conduct examinations for the Commission, it is spared some of the expense that would otherwise be required if its field engineers were sent for this purpose. It is hoped that such assistance could be obtained in Samoa.

Adopted: June 7, 1961